

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended the lives of our nation's children and youth and added additional stressors that have significantly strained their mental health and wellbeing. Children and youth across the country continue to confront the traumatic challenges of this pandemic, including disruptions to their lives, fear and anxiety about the virus, and the tragic death of loved ones. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health disorders are chronic conditions that, without proper diagnosis and treatment, can lead to problems for children at home and in school, interfering with their health and development.

We must provide the necessary funding and resources to reach children and youth early on in life. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 20 percent of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition, with 50 percent of all lifetime cases of mental illness beginning by age 14, and 75 percent beginning by age 24. Furthermore, an August 2021 study published in JAMA Pediatrics found that the prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms during COVID-19 have doubled from pre-pandemic rates. In a March 2021 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report issued by the CDC, more than 20 percent of parents reported their school-aged children as having experienced an overall worsening of mental or emotional health.

In December 2021, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a new Surgeon General's Advisory to highlight the urgent need for families, educators and schools, community organizations, media and technology companies, and governments to address our nation's worsening youth mental health crisis. The advisory noted that youth mental health challenges have been on the rise even prior to COVID-19, and from 2007 to 2018, the suicide rate among youth aged 10-24 increased by 57 percent.

As you work to prepare the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, we strongly encourage you to fund the following programs that address children and youth mental health:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Current Funding Level (FY22): \$7,000,000; Request (FY23): \$15,000,000

Purpose of program: As the nation's leading health protection agency, the CDC must prioritize the collection and reporting of data on ACEs. ACEs are potential traumatic events that occur in childhood ages 0-17 that can negatively affect future health, education, job opportunities, and earning potential. According to the CDC, examples of ACEs include experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect. Aspects of a child's environment, such as growing up in a household with instability or mental health problems, can also undermine their sense of safety and stability.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

1. National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (NTSI)

Current Funding Level (FY22): \$81,800,000; Request (FY23): \$150,000,000

Purpose of program: The NTSI was established to improve behavioral health services and interventions for children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events. Funding is provided to a national network of more than 140 affiliated centers located in universities, hospitals, and community-based organizations to develop and promote effective community practices for children and adolescents exposed to a wide array of traumatic events.

2. Project AWARE

Current Funding Level (FY22): \$120,001,000; Request (FY23): \$244,000,000

Purpose of program: Project AWARE grants are awarded to State Education Agencies to identify children and youth in need of mental health services, increase access to mental health treatment, and promote mental health literacy among teachers and school personnel.

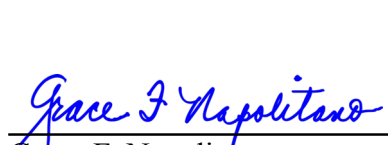
3. Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT)

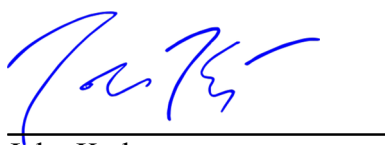
Current Funding Level (FY22): 24,963,000; Request (FY23): \$64,000,000

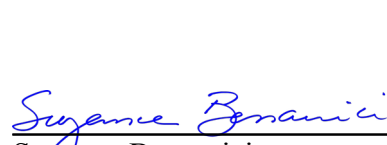
Purpose of the program: MHAT grants provide training for school personnel, emergency first responders and law enforcement, veterans, and members of the armed services to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions.


We truly appreciate your continued commitment to mental health and respectfully request funding for these key programs in the FY23 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Sincerely,

  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

  
John Katko  
Member of Congress

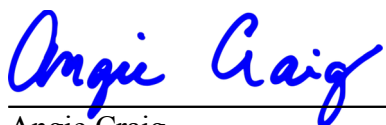
  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress



Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



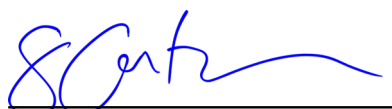
Jamaal Bowman  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress




Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



---

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



---

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



---

Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



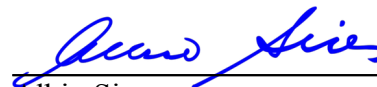
---

Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



---

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



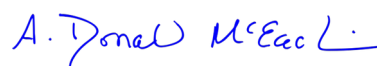
---

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



---

Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



---

A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress



---

Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



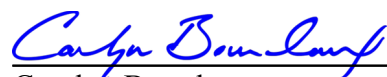
---

Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



---

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



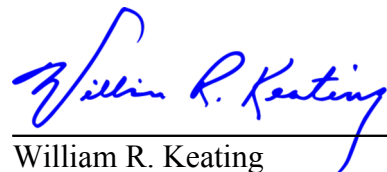
---

Carolyn Bourdeaux  
Member of Congress



---

Cynthia Axne  
Member of Congress



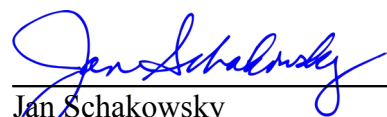
---

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



---

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



---

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress